REMARKS

Claims 18-26, 28-30, 32-51, 53-55, and 57-62 are pending. Independent Claims 18 and 41 have been amended to further describe the functional properties of the claimed tubes. A minor editorial change has been made to Claim 45. Support for this amendment is found in the specification on page 15, lines 6-et seq., on page 18 and in the drawings. Accordingly, the Applicants do not believe that any new matter has been added. Favorable consideration is now respectfully requested.

The Applicants thank Examiner Bruenjes for the courteous and helpful discussion of August 19, 2004. The lack of any disclosure of a tube in Kodama was discussed. The examiner pointed out that section [0026] of Kodama described medical devices and food containers that might be made from the multilayer laminate of Kodama. The examiner pointed out that the secondary reference, Hotta, disclosed plastic tubes. The Applicants urged that neither reference disclosed or suggested multilaminate tubes, especially tubes having the superior flexibility and non-stick properties required by the present claims. The examiner indicated that little or no weight had been given to the functional limitations in the independent claims, because these were deemed to be inherent characteristics of the multilayer laminate of Kodama.

Rejection--35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 18-26, 28-30,32-51,53-55, and 57-62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kodama et al. (JP 09-254339), in view of Hotta, U.S. Patent No. 4,588,777. The cited prior art does render the invention obvious for multiple reasons.

Neither document discloses or suggests a multilaminate tube, especially, a multilaminate tube having the superior flexibility and superior "non-stick" properties characterized by a sheerpeel and 180° peel strength values required by Claims 18 and 41.

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The Official Action indicates that <u>Kodama</u>, abstract and page 10, paragraph 12, disclose a laminate for forming a tube or medical product. The Applicants disagree, because there is no disclosure at all in <u>Kodama</u> of a tube formed from a multilayer laminate such as that of Claim 18, much less the three layer tube of Claim 41. <u>Kodama et al.</u> teaches only a thin "film", such as wrapping or packaging film, not a tube. However, the invention is directed to a "tube", such as medical tube. The "film" of <u>Kodama et al.</u> and a "tube" of the present invention are two completely different articles and, from the technical point of view, a strict distinction should be made between them. Moreover, since there is no disclosure of a tube, there cannot be any reasonable expectation of success in obtaining a tube with the superior flexibility and non-stick properties of the present invention.

As discussed, the last page of Kodama [0026] describes a multilayer laminate superior in transparency, flexibility, etc. The English translation of this section is not clear, however, it appears to describe potential uses for the multilayer laminate of Kodama, such as for packaging films, book covers, medicine hygienic materials, stationary, or food containers. These products could all be considered flat sheet-like products. Even food containers, such as plastic wrappers, films used to seal "TV dinners" or pouches containing food are flat sheet like products. Moreover, this section of Kodama merely speculates about possible uses of the multilayer laminate. Kodama [0026] does not provide sufficient suggestion or motivation for making the tube of the present invention, nor provide any reasonable expectation of success in this disclosure for a multilaminate tube with the superior properties required for the multilaminate tube of independent Claims 18 and 41. Moreover, the Kodama plastic compositions differ from those of the present invention as will be addressed below in more detail.

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Hotta also fails to disclose a multilaminate tube with the superior flexibility and nonstick properties required by the present invention. Hotta does disclose that tubes may be
constructed from synthetic resin, see col. 6, line 8. However, there is no suggestion to
construct a multilaminate tube, nor any reasonable expectation of success that a
multilaminate tube would have the superior properties of the multilaminate tube of the
present invention. Essentially all that Hotta teaches is that tubes can be made out of plastic!
What is missing from the prior art is any suggestion to make a tube from the materials of
Kodama, or any suggestion of how to make and use such a tube. Even if there were some
hint in the prior art to make tubes from the multilayer laminate of Kodama, there is no
reasonable expectation of success that such a tube would have the properties required of the
tube of the present invention.

The examiner indicated that little or no weight had been given to the functional properties of the claimed tubes, because these properties were deemed to be inherent to any product made from the multilayer laminate of Kodama. The Applicants note that a functional limitation must be evaluated and considered, just like any other limitation of the claim for what it fairly conveys to a person of ordinary skill in the art, see MPEP 2173.05(h).

Moreover, for a reference to serve as an anticipation when it is silent about the asserted inherent characteristic, such a gap in the reference may be filled with recourse to extrinsic evidence. Such evidence must make clear that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference, see MPEP 2131.01 (III). The Applicants submit that no such showing has been made in the Official Action, that is, that the functional properties required by Claims 18 and 41 are necessarily present in tubing produced from the materials of Kodama.

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Furthermore the Applicants submit that these functional properties are not inherent to the multilayer laminate of Kodama, because different plastics or combinations of plastics would confer different functional properties and Kodama discloses different plastic compositions and various ranges of plastic ingredients which differ from those of the present invention. The compositional differences of the Kodama materials are discussed further below (see Table 3 below). Therefore, even if there were a suggestion to make tubes from the Kodama multilayer laminate, Kodama provides no guidance for selecting the compositions or combinations of resins (a) and (b) required by Claims 18 and 41 for producing tubes having the required functional properties. Accordingly, for these reasons and for those set forth in more detail below, the Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

1. Amended Claims 18 and 41

To further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art, independent Claims 18 and 41 have been further revised to clarify certain technical features and differences, such as further describing the anti-kink property of the claimed tubes and their non-stick properties. In order to make the technical features of the present invention clearer over Kodama et al., the following language has been added to both Claims 18 and 41 (hereinafter referred to as "the claim"):

"wherein said resin (I) forming a thick substrate layer and resin (II) forming a connection layer thinner than the substrate layer, the connection layer being capable of connecting to another tube or article by hot melt bonding, solvent bonding or adhesive bonding,

wherein said tube can form an arc having a radius of 20 mm without kinking, thereby the tube showing good resistance against tube/tube sticking and tube/film sticking after high-pressure sterilization."

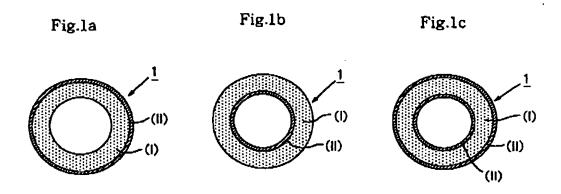
This amendment clarifies that in the tube of the present invention, the resin (I) forms a thick substrate layer and resin (II) forms a connection layer which is thinner compared with

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the substrate layer, and the connection layer is capable of connecting to other tube or article such as injection-molded plastic article by hot melt bonding, solvent bonding or adhesive bonding. The tube of the invention has no kinking property and shows good resistance against tube/tube sticking and tube/film sticking after high-pressure steam sterilization. These specified characteristics of the medical tube of the present invention could not be suggested by Kodama et al., which is merely directed to film or sheet for wrapping (or by Hotta who mere teaches plastic tubes).

2. Technical features of the invention

A brief explanation about the technical feature of the present invention is given based on the amended claims before making comparison with Kodama et al. The two-layered or three-layered tube of the present invention is medical tube suitable for use in medical application, wherein resin (I) constitutes a thick substrate layer and resin (II) forms connection layer which is far thin compared with the substrate layer. The constitutions of these two-layered and three-layered tubes are clearly shown by the following figures (reproduced from the attached drawings of the present invention).



In these figures, Fig. 1a shows the constitution wherein resin (I) forms a thick substrate layer which composes inner layer, and resin (II) forms a connection layer far thinner compared with the substrate layer, which composes the outer layer. Fig. 1b shows, on the

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contrary, the case wherein resin (I) forms thick substrate layer which composes the outer layer, while resin (II) forms a thinner connection layer composes the inner layer. Fig. 1c shows the three-layered tube wherein resin (I) forms thick substrate layer composing intermediate layer, while resin (II) forming thinner connection layer comprises inner and outer layers.

The resin (I) which forms thick substrate layer as shown in the Figures, comprises:

- (a) 5 to 40 mass% of polypropylene resin and
- (b) 95 to 60 mass% of at least one selected from
 - i) a first hydrogenated block copolymer,
 - ii) a second hydrogenated block copolymer, and
 - iii) a third hydrogenated block copolymer.

While the resin (II), which constitutes a very thin connection layer comprises:

- (a') 45 to 100 mass% of polypropylene resin and
- (b') 55 to 0 mass% of at least one selected from
 - i) a first hydrogenated block copolymer,
 - ii) a second hydrogenated block copolymer, and
 - iii) a third hydrogenated block copolymer.

As shown above, in the present invention, the hydrogenated copolymer (b) or (b'), which is used with the polypropylene resin (a) or (a'), is such polymer being characterized by consisting of only block copolymer at specified concentration and having no random copolymer. A tube containing hydrogenated random copolymer can not make a satisfactory good medical tube.

The medical tube of the present invention, being characterized by the constitution as described above, even after subjecting to high-pressure steam sterilization, shows no

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stickiness (tackiness) on the surface, thereby preventing any thermal sticking of one tube to another and sticking of the tube to the surface of the sterilizing bag.

The tube of the present invention undergoes <u>no tube-to-tube thermal sticking</u> after high-pressure steam sterilization, with forceps clamping the tube, as is provided in the claim as: "said tube has (i)a <u>tube/tube shear peal strength</u> of less than 35N, as measured on a stuck or adhered portion of the outermost layer of one said tube against the outermost layer of another said tube <u>after autoclave sterilization at 121°C for 20 minutes</u>".

And the tube of the present invention also shows no tube-to-film thermal sticking after high-pressure steam sterilization, with the tube in touch with the surface of the innermost polypropylene layer of a sterilizing bag, as is provided in the claim as: "said tube has (ii)a tube/film 180° peel strength of less than 10N, as measured on a stuck or adhered portion of the outermost layer of said tube and an innermost polypropylene layer of a sterilization bag, by the test method defined in JIS K6854 after autoclave sterilization at 121°C for 20 minutes"

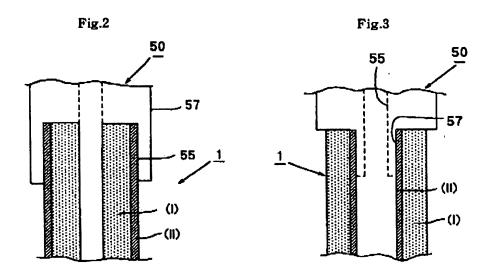
The tube of the present invention also shows excellent high anti-kinking property as is provided in the claim as: "wherein said tube can form an arc having a radius of 20 mm without kinking", so that the tube is free from serious problem associated with infusion, in which the tube undergoes easy bent and blocks the flow of blood or infusion fluid in the medical tube.

The medical tube of the present invention, having a connection layer composed of resin (II) which is far thinner than the substrate layer of the resin (I), is capable of connecting to other tube with different diameter or injection-molded article by hot-melt bonding, solvent bonding or adhesive bonding, thereby forms suitable medical devices such as a blood circuit and infusion circuit as is provided in the claim as: "the connection layer being capable of

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connecting to other tube or article by hot melt bonding, solvent bonding or adhesive bonding".

The detailed connection procedure of the tube is shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 below of the present invention.



In Fig. 2, wherein the connection layer of the resin (II) forms the outer layer of the tube, it is shown how a connection to a tube 50 having different diameter, is made by utilizing the outer connection layer (II), by preferably hot melt bonding or solvent bonding. In Fig. 3, wherein the connection layer of the resin (II) forms the inner layer, it is demonstrated how a connection to a tube 50 with different diameter is made by utilizing the inner connection layer(II), by similarly hot melt bonding or solvent bonding.

3. Comparison of present invention with Kodama et al.

The present invention is directed to a tube that is hollow inside forming a channel through which a fluid may flow. A convenient English dictionary, LONGMAN Advanced AMERICAN DICTIONARY, gives the definition for a tube as: "Tube is a round pipe made of soft material especially for liquids or gases to go through."

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More specifically, the present invention is directed to a <u>multi-layered medical tube</u> suitable for use in an extracorporeal circulation circuit such as a blood circuit for artificial kidney dialysis, a blood circuit for blood plasma exchange, a circuit for ascites treatment systems by filtration, concentration and infusion. The multi-layered tube of the present invention is also preferably used, in various medical devices such as a blood tube, an infusion tube, a catheter, and a balloon catheter, etc.

The tube for such medical apparatuses or devices must hold intact its tubular-shape and not be deformed or crashed easily (shape-sustainability) thereby securing said tube's inside channel so that blood or infusion fluid can flow through the channel smoothly. In order to have enough shape-sustainability, a tube should have some rigidity, which means that said tube is composed of thick flexible plastic material to give good tube-wall thickness. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the thickness of the tube is about $1.0 \, \text{mm}$ to $1.1 \, \text{mm}$ ($1,000 \, \mu \text{m} - 1.100 \, \mu \text{m}$) (see p21, lines 33-36, p29, lines 1-6, of the specification).

(2) Kodama et al is directed to a film

Meanwhile, Kodama et al. is basically directed to a film (a very thin film), or at most a sheet not a tube. Kodama et al. gives no description nor suggestion about a tube.

First of all, to give more objective basis for fair and unbiased analysis and judgment of Kodama et al., Applicants carried out a full text "search and replacement procedure" over Kodama et al. reference (Japanese Patent publication No. 1997-254339) for the words "film" and "sheet", using Microsoft Word's search and replacement software algorithm. (In the search and replacement procedure, each of the Japanese word "7 1712" (film) present in the Kodama text is automatically found out and replaced one by one with the corresponding English word "film".) The electronic file of Kodama et al. text, to be processed, was obtained by downloading from the data base file offered by Japanese Patent Office.

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The result was attached as Exhibit-1 and summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 frequency of "film" and "tube" in Kodama et al. text

Number of appearance of the word "film" or "sheet"	54 times
Number of appearance of the word "tube"	0 time

As shown above, <u>Kodama et al.</u> in his specification directed to multi-layered laminate, <u>referred to "film" or "sheet" as many s fifty four (54!) times</u>, while with respect to <u>"tube"</u>, <u>completely no reference</u> was made. This overwhelming fact is for Examiner's unfettered and unbiased consideration.

Kodama et al.'s fifty-four-time-referred-to-film (a very thin film), is substantially directed to a wrapping film for apparel materials, film for book cover, film for electronic circuit printing, wrapping film for stationery products, wrapping film for medical appliances (medical packaging film), medical disposable bag (medical abolition sack), medical and sanitary material (medical hygienic material), facial film, and surface protection film and the like (see paragraph [0026] of Kodama et al. publication.).

The Office Action appears to incorrectly refer to these medical packaging film, medical abolition sack or medical hygienic material (film), as "medical appliance."

In the medical field, by the term "medical appliance", it is meant such devices as extracorporeal circulation circuit such as a blood circuit for artificial kidney dialysis, a blood circuit for blond plasma exchange, a circuit for ascites treatment systems by filtration, concentration and infusion, a blood tube, an infusion tube, a catheter or a balloon catheter.

The medical packaging film of the <u>Kodama et al.</u> is only a wrapping film to pack these "medical appliances" (such as extracorporeal circulation circuit such as a blood circuit for artificial kidney dialysis, a blood circuit for blood plasma exchange, a circuit for ascites treatment systems by filtration, concentration and infusion, a blood tube, an infusion tube, a catheter or a balloon catheter.)

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The film disclosed in Kodama et al. has the thickness of not less than $10 \mu m$, preferably $20 \mu m$, and in the preferred embodiment example, $40 \mu m$ thick multi-layered film is used (see paragraph [0012] and [0014] of Kodama et al. publication.).

Considering the thickness of the film ($10 \mu m$, $20 \mu m$. and at most $40 \mu m$) to which Kodama et al. is directed to, it is undoubtedly to be used as a wrapping film or packaging film only, such as well known Saran WrapTM wrapping film (its film thickness is widely known to be about $10\text{-}20 \mu m$). Such a thin film like Saran WrapTM could not make a practical tube. Because the tube made of such thin film has no shape-sustainability and easily deforms or collapses under its own weight, therefore rendering its use for medical use such as blood fusion completely impossible.

The multi-layered tube of the present invention has a wall thickness of $\underline{1,000}$ - $\underline{1,100\mu\text{m}}$, about one hundred (100) times the thickness of <u>Kodama et al.</u>'s thin wrapping film ($\underline{10-20\mu\text{m}}$). Accordingly, <u>Kodama et al.</u> does not describe and cannot suggest the <u>tube</u> of the present invention.

(3) Comparison

As described above, the tube of the present invention and film of the <u>Kodama et al.</u> are both directed to multi-layered body, but the basic shapes ("tube" versus "film") are completely different. The different structural characteristics of the prior art film and claimed tube provide different utilities and applications and, therefore, <u>leading to different problems</u> to be solved.

The medical tube of the present invention with form-sustainability, having a hollow channel formed inside, is suitable for use in medical appliance, and is assembled to make a blood circuit line, thereby supplied blood or fusion fluid to the line flows through the channel. While conventional medical tube, which is composed of flexible plastic material,

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has a drawback wherein the tube tends to sometimes deform during handling, especially when being bent, causing kinks to form. Said kinking, when it occurs in a tube, can clog the channel, thereby blocking the smooth stream of blood or fusion fluid, rendering the tube inapplicable for medical applications.

It is to this point that the claim of the present invention provides as:

"wherein said tube can form an arc having a radius of 20 mm without kinking".

As is shown in the working examples of the invention (see table 4 and 5 of the specification), the medical tube of the present invention has a very strong anti-kinking property of smallest radius of curvature of less than 20 mm, preferably about 11-13 mm, which means that with the tube of the present invention kinking is hard to occur compared with conventional medical tubes.

On the contrary, <u>Kodama et al.</u> is directed to a thin film, not a tube. The film is mainly used for wrapping or packing applications, not for flowing blood and the like. In addition, because the film of <u>Kodama et al.</u> is so thin, it cannot make any form-sustainable tube, as already discussed. In short, there is no occurrence of <u>kinking problem</u> to the wrapping or packaging film of <u>Kodama et al.</u>, which forms a remarkable and striking contrast with the tube of the present invention.

As discussed above, the medical tube of the present invention is completely different from Kodama et al.'s wrapping or packaging film in required properties, safety standards, or applications.

(4) The fact that <u>Kodama et al.</u> is directed to film or sheet for wrapping (packaging) application and no description nor suggestion about a tube is provided in <u>Kodama et al.</u> reference, is also shown as below:

The shape or constitution of the medical tube of the present invention is clearly described with the following attached drawings:

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Table 2 Figures given in the present Invention and Kodama et al.

This Invention " multi-layered tube "	Kodama et al laminate
Fig.1a 1 Fig.1b 1 (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (i	No Figure or Drawing is given at all
Fig.1c 1 Pig.3 (II) Fig.3 55 50 00 00	

With respect to the invention directed to multi-layered tube, because said tube being a three dimensional, article, it is essential to provide such drawings (Fig. 1a-Fig. 1c) as shown above in order to demonstrate the exact positioning of substrate layer and connection layer, when the former (or the latter) being the inner layer or the latter (or the former) the outer layer, and in order for a person skilled in the art to fully understand the technical meaning of the each layers positioning of the multi-layered tube of the present invention. And without Figures such as Fig. 2-Fig. 3 above, it would be impossible or very difficult to demonstrate how the connection of the multi-layered tube is made to other article such as a tube with different diameter using the connection layer (II) of the present invention.

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Kodama et al. provides no figures or drawings. Because Kodama et al. is directed to film, and film being a two dimensional article, no drawing is necessary to describe it.

The fact that <u>Kodama et al.</u> discloses only "film", and no tube, is also shown clearly from the following descriptions of the applicants' specification and <u>Kodama et al.</u>'s reference:

In the multi-layered tube of the present invention, the thickness is about 1-1.0mm $(1000-1100\mu\text{m})$ and ratio of the thickness of substrate layer (I) to that of connection layer (II) is 940-980/60-20(=16/1-49/1), indicating that the substrate layer (I) should be thick enough compared with connection layer (II), or in other words, the connection layer (II) should be thin enough compared with substrate layer (I). Please refer to Fig. 1a-Fig. 1c, showing diagrammatically that thickness of substrate layer (I) is much larger than that of connection layer (II).

If the thickness ratio of layer (I) to layer (II) is not within said specified value, the tube comes to lose flexibility and especially, <u>kinking phenomenon</u>, <u>which is critical for use in any medical application like blood transfusion</u>, <u>may occur</u>. And also the tube can not be subjected to high-steam sterilization.

On the other hand, in Kodama et al. the film is a very thin 10-40 μ m-thick-film and the ratio of substrate layer to surface layer is 1/1-8/1, preferably 2/1-6/1(Paragraph [0012]), indicating that the thickness of substrate layer to facial layer is too small that even if a tube is to be made using this film, the obtained tube has no shape-sustainability and readily deforms or collapses under its own weight. Moreover, such a tube would readily bend (kink) and could not be used as medical application. In the first place, such a thin-filmed-tube could never stand high pressure steam sterilization, rendering the tube useless as medical tube.

In addition to that, the tube having the ratio of substrate layer to surface layer is 1/1-8/1, preferably 2/1-6/1, would be unable to connect to other tube or injection molded article,

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because <u>surface layer of the tube is too thick compared with substrate layer</u>, thereby rendering the tube meaningless as medical tube.

Kodama et al. provides no drawing such as Fig. 2-Fig. 3 of the present invention and completely silent on the connection layer (II) of the present invention, silent on the way in which said connection layer being capable of connecting to other tube or article by hot melt bonding, solvent bonding or adhesive bonding, even when connection layer being outer layer or inner layer.

Kodama et al., because it being directed to wrapping or packaging film, is completely silent on the specific features of the present invention, the features being:

"The medical tube of the present invention shows no kinking, and even after highpressure steam sterilization, still having

(i) a tube/tube shear peel strength of less than 35N, as measured on a stuck or adhered portion of the outermost layer of one said tube against the outermost layer of another said tube after autoclave sterilization at 121°C for 20 minutes,

and having (ii) a tube/film 180° peel strength of less than 10 N, as measured on a stuck or adhered portion of the outermost layer of said tube and an innermost polypropylene layer of a sterilization bag, by the test method defined in JIS K6854 after autoclave sterilization at 121°C for 20 minutes, thereby showing good resistance to tube/tube sticking and tube/film sticking."

Kodama et al. discloses only "inflation method" or "T-die method" as a method or apparatus to make his multi-layered laminate (see paragraph [0012]). The fact that only "inflation" or "T-die" method is disclosed in Kodama et al. reference is demonstrated by conducting full text search and replacement procedure for the word "イソフレーショソネ"(inflation method) and "Tタイ"(T-die method). Please refer to attached Kodama et al. text (Exhibit-1) in

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which replacement of Japanese word by English counterpart "inflation method" and "T-die method" is accomplished, and the result is summarized in Table 4 (page 18).

As widely known in the area of present invention, inflation or T-die method is used to make film or sheet, not for producing a tube. The fact that only "inflation method" or "T-die method" is provided to make multi-layered laminate, clearly shows <u>Kodama et al.</u> is directed only to film or sheet. <u>Kodama et al.</u> doesn't teach or suggest a method to make a tube.

(5) In Kodama et al.'s polymer composition, to make a good film laminate, random copolymer be used as a main and indispensable polymer, while block polymer is basically not preferable and should be as small as possible.

Kodama et al. discloses hydrogenated diene copolymer of conjugated diene and aromatic vinyl compound, wherein random copolymer being main and indispensable polymer.

In the polymer composition to make medical tube of the present invention, on the contrary, block copolymer is indispensable while random copolymer should be excluded (indispensability or essentiality of 100% block copolymer). This is the point where present invention is completely different from Kodama et al. The polymer compositions of the present invention and Kodama et al. are summarized in Table 3 and compared.

Table 3 Polymer compositions of present invention and Kodama et al.

	This invention	Kodama et al.
(I)	(a) 5-40 mass% of a polypropylene resin	(A) 20-95% of a polypropylene resin and
` ′	and	(B) 80-5% of:
	(b) 95-60% of:	hydrogenated random copolymer of
:	(i) a first hydrogenated block copolymer	conjugated diene and aromatic vinyl
	(ii) a second hydrogenated block	compound (random copolymer is
	copolymer and	essential and should be more than 50%,
	(iii) a third hydrogenated block copolymer	preferably 85-94%)
İ	(no random copolymer allowed)	
(II)	(a) 45-100 mass% of a polypropylene	(A) 50-100% of a polypropylene resin
` ´	resin and	and
	(b) 55-0% of:	(B) 50-0% of:
	(i) a first hydrogenated block copolymer	hydrogenated random copolymer of
1	(ii) a second hydrogenated block	conjugated diene and aromatic vinyl
	copolymer and	compound (random copolymer is
	(iii) a third hydrogenated block copolymer	essential and should be more than 50%,
	(no random copolymer contained)	preferably 85-94%)
	(no random copolymer allowed)	

As discussed above, in the <u>Kodama et al.</u>'s hydrogenated diene copolymer of conjugated diene and aromatic vinyl compound, random copolymer is main and indispensable polymer (<u>indispensability or essentiality of random copolymer</u>).

The essentiality of random copolymer of <u>Kodama et al.</u> is shown by studying the table 3 of <u>Kodama et al.</u> reference (comparative example 4), wherein laminated sheet, which is composed of (A)(A') substrate layer containing 20% of <u>block copolymer (random copolymer part 0%)</u> and (B)(B') surface layer comprising <u>block copolymer (random copolymer part 0%)</u> of conjugated diene and aromatic vinyl compound, has poor transparency and flexibility, therefore could not be used as wrapping or packaging film for apparel material.

Thus, <u>Kodama et al.</u> clearly declares that <u>for the wrapping or packaging application</u>, the use of block copolymer (random copolymer content 0%) is not preferable and should be avoided. (On top of that, though in comparative example 4 of <u>Kodama et al.</u>, block copolymer is used, its polypropylene composition is completely different from that of present invention.) Just to make sure, in the field of polymer chemistry, a "<u>block</u> copolymer" does

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not contain any random copolymer part in the polymer molecule chain. This is true with the present invention that the block copolymer actually used in the present invention has zero random copolymer content.

It should also be recognized that <u>Kodama et al.</u> gives detailed explanations <u>only about</u> random-copolymer-essential hydrogenated diene polymer, with respect to its styrene content, butadiene and/or isoprene vinyl bond and content etc., but completely silent on (i) a first hydrogenated <u>block copolymer</u>, (ii)a second hydrogenated <u>block copolymer</u> and (iii) a third hydrogenated <u>block copolymer</u> of the present invention.

As discussed above, since the compositions of the polymer being completely different, Kodama et al.'s film made of hydrogenated diene polymer, which is random-copolymer-essential, could never have the same peeling strength that of the tube of the present invention made of (100%) block-copolymer-indispensable (with no random copolymer) hydrogenated copolymer.

Since the compositions of the polymers are completely different as summarized in Table 3, the Official Action is incorrect and groundless to suggest that Kodama et al. film may show, after steam sterilization, the (i) same tube/tube shear peel strength and (ii) tube/film 180° peel strength of the present invention as provided in the claim as

"(i) a tube/tube shear peel strength of less than 35N, as measured on a stuck or adhered portion of the outermost layer of one said tube against the outermost layer of another said tube after autoclave sterilization at 121°C for 20 minutes"

and "(ii) a tube/film 180° peel strength of less than 10 N, as measured on a stuck or adhered portion of the outermost layer of said tube and an innermost polypropylene layer of a sterilization bag, by the test method defined in JIS K6854 after autoclave sterilization at 121°C for 20 minutes."

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Thus, the Applicants submit that the Official Action is incorrect and groundless, it is mere speculation.

II. Hotta

1. Hotta is directed to a single-layered tube not a multilayered tube

Hotta discloses polymer composition consisting of (a) 10-30% of polypropylene resin, (b) 40-80% of hydrogenated block copolymer comprising aromatic vinyl compound or conjugated diene and (c) 10-30% of ethylene-acrylate copolymer, said polymer composition is manufactured into sheets, blocks, nets or tubes(column 6, lines 3-17, column 12, Claim 1).

However, first of all, great attention should be given to the fact that <u>Hotta</u>'s tube is <u>single-layered tube (SLT)</u>, not a multi-layered tube (MLT) such as two-layered or three-layered tube, which the present invention is directed to.

SLT is a very primitive and nascent type of tube at the earliest stage of medical tube development history. As is clearly disclosed in the present specification as "background art", SLT such as Hotta's, even if how drastically the polymer compositions be changed, could never have all the performances of the present invention as:

"(a) The tube having proper flexibility without kinking upon bending, (b) the tube showing no stickiness (tackiness) on the surface and free from any change in form and dimensions after being sterilized with high-pressure steam, and (c) the tube permitting hot melt bonding or solvent bonding when connected to other tube having a different diameter or an injection-molded article."

Hotta is directed to <u>SLT</u>, a nascent type of tube having only one tube wall, hence in order to compensate the shortage or lack of layers, the existing one layer must have very complex polymer composition. This is the reason why <u>Hotta</u>'s single layer essentially composed of (c) 10-30% of ethylene-acrylate copolymer in addition to (a) polypropylene

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resin and (b) hydrogenated block copolymer comprising aromatic vinyl compound or conjugated diene. Hotta's SLT, therefore, owing to additional polymer composition of (c) 10-30% of ethylene-acrylate copolymer, is liable to undergo kinking, and during high pressure steam sterilization, the acrylate copolymer may subjected to hydrolysis to release acrylic acid thereby internal or outer surface of the tube becomes sticky or tacky and the SLT comes to adhered together or to the inner surface of sterilization bag. The ethylene-acrylate copolymer, being such an undesirable composition, is never used in the present invention.

Hotta is completely silent on the possibilities of composing two-or three-layered tube using said (a) polypropylene resin and (b) hydrogenated block copolymer comprising aromatic vinyl compound or conjugated diene, and avoiding (c) ethylene-acrylate copolymer.

Hotta is still more silent on composing two layered tube, "wherein resin (I) forming a thick substrate layer and resin (II) forming a connection layer thin enough compared with the substrate layer, the connection layer being capable of connecting to other tube or article by hot melt bonding, solvent bonding or adhesive bonding" as is provided in the present claim.

As discussed above, such being the teachings or disclosures of <u>Kodama et al.'s film</u> and <u>Hotta's SLT</u>, it would be quite meaningless or would not make any sense trying to combine <u>Kodama et al.</u> and <u>Hotta</u> and thereby going to nowhere.

III. With respect to Kodama et al.

In conclusion, the disclosures of Kodama et al. are once again summarized as bellow:

(1) First of all, <u>Kodama et al.</u> is directed only to "film" or "sheet" as already shown in Table 1. No description or suggestion of a "tube" is found in the <u>Kodama et al.</u> publication.

Table 1 frequency of "film" and "tube" in Kodama et al. text

Number of appearance of the word "film" or "sheet"	54 times
Number of appearance of the word "tube"	0 time

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- (2) <u>Kodama et al.</u> discloses only "inflation method" and "T-die method" as a method or apparatus to make his multi-layered laminate as is shown in Table 4 (inflation or T-die method appears as many as eight (8) times, while any method to make tube never appears). As is well known to the skilled person, inflation or T-die method is exclusively used to make film or sheet, not for producing a tube. Inflation or T-die method is unable to produce any tube.

Table 4 frequency of "inflation method" and "T'-die method"

Number of appearance of the word "inflation" or "T-die"	8 times
(method to make "film" or "sheet")	
Number of any method to make "tube"	0 time

(3) As is shown in Table 5, <u>Kodama et al.</u>'s film or sheet is not the "<u>medical appliance</u>" per se, instead, said film or sheet is only a wrapping or packaging material (<u>accessory</u>) for "<u>medical appliance</u>".

Those film materials disclosed in <u>Kodama et al.</u>, such as medical packaging film, should not be classified or called as "medical appliance", it's very confusing manner.

Table 5 Applications of Kodama et al. film

This invention:	Applications of Kodama et al. film
"medical appliance" such as "medical tube"	(paragraph [0006])
"Medical appliance" means such appliances or	Medical packaging film (wrapping film
devices per se as: extracorporeal circulation	for medical appliance)
circuit such as a blood circuit for artificial kidney	Medical abolition sack (medical
dialysis, a blood circuit for blood plasma	disposable bag)
exchange, a circuit for ascites treatment systems by	Medical hygienic material (film)
filtration, concentration and infusion, a medical	(medical and sanitary material) (film)
tube such as a blood tube, an infusion tube, a	
catheter or a balloon catheter	
Medical tube of the present invention is medical	These are not called or categorized as
appliance per se	"medical appliance".
	These are not "medical appliance" per
	se.
	These are at most <u>accessory or</u>
	supporting film material which are used
	to wrap or package the "medical
	appliance" (medical tube) of the present
	invention before use.
	These are also accessory film material
	which are used to wrap or package the
	used "medical tube" of the present
	invention ("used medical appliance")
	for disposing.
	These are also accessory film material
	which are used to wrap or package the
	"medical appliance" (medical tube) of
	the present invention as a dust cover or
	dust protective film.

(4) In table 6, comparison is also made and summarized with respect to the tube of the present invention and <u>Kodama et al.</u> film.

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Table 6 Comparison of present invention tube with Kodama et al. film

Medical Tube of the present invention	Kodama et al. accessory film
Thickness: about 1-1.1 mm (1000-1100μm)	Thickness: 10-40 μm, too thin to make any
	tube
Resin (I) forming thick substrate layer,	Only having substrate layer/surface layer.
Resin (II) constituting far thin connection	"Surface layer" forming no connection layer.
layer (I) capable of connecting to other	Thickness ratio:
article.	1/1-8/1(2/1-6/1)
Thickness ratio:	Substrate layer being too thin to form a tube.
940-980/60-20(=16/1-49/1)	Surface layer being too thick to form a
	connection layer.
Constitutions of two-layered and three-	No drawings given at all.
layered tube are clearly shown in drawings.	
(Fig. 1a-1c)	
Connection layer(II) is capable of connecting	No description given at all.
to other tube or article by hot melt bonding or	
solvent bonding.	
Way of connections are shown in drawings	No drawing given at all.
when connection layer(II) constitutes inner	No description given at all.
layer or outer layer and detailed description	
given. (Fig. 2-3)	
Tube of the present invention suffers no	No description given at all.
kinking and having good anti-forceps.	
Tube of the present invention shows good	No description given at all.
resistance against tube/tube sticking and	
tube/film sticking after high pressure steam	
sterilization, also showing good anti-thermal	
sticking.	

Accordingly, for all of the above reasons, the Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. Early notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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EXHIBIT-1

(12)公開特許公報(A)

(11)【公開番号】特開平9-254339 (43)【公開日】平成9年(1997)9月30日

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(51)【国際特許分類第6版】
B32B 27/32
  25/16
// C08L 9/00 LBG
  23/14 LCB
[FI]
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表1

水添ジエン系共重合体	p-1	2-נים	□-3	□-4	□-5	□-6	□-7		
水添前重合体の構造									
・共役ジエン化合物	BD(*1)	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD		
・芳香族ビニル化合物	ST(*1)	ST	ST	ST	ST	ST	ST		
・ランダム共重合部分 の含量(重量%)	92	94	85	94	94	92	0		
・共役ジェン単位の1, 2-結合と3,4-結合と の合計の割合(*2)	82	79	78	7 5	20	78	-		
・共役ジエン化合物/ 芳香族ビニル化合物 の重量比	88/12	93/7	78/22	92/8	91/9	90/10	71/29		
水素添加率(%)	99	99	97	97	95	30	99		
数平均分子量(×10 ⁴)	31	39	28	4.5	25	76			

(57) 要約】 【課 題】 透明 性、柔 軟性、 寒価 性、溶 断シー ル強 度、ヒ ートシ ール強 度等に 優れ、 しかも 透明性 の経時 変化の 小さい 多層積 層体を 提供す

(*1) BD: ブタジエン、ST: スチレン。

(42) ランダム共重合部分における全共役ジェン単位に対する割合(%)。

【解決手段】 多層積層体は、ポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)および共役ジエン化合物と芳香族ビニル化合物とのランダム共重合部分を主体とする重合体を水素添加した水添ジエン系重合体(ロ)からなる樹脂組成物(ハ)から形成された基材層の少なくとも片面に、上記(イ)成分を主体とする樹脂組成物(ニ)から形成された表層を積層してなる。

【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 ポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)95~20重量%および共役ジエン化合物と 芳香族ビニル化合物とのランダム共重合部分を主体とする少なくとも1種の重合体の共役 ジエン部分の二重結合が水素添加された水添ジエン系重合体(ロ)5~80重量%からなる樹脂組成物(ハ)から形成された基材層の少なくとも一方の面に、ポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)100~50重量%および少なくとも1種の水添ジエン系重合体(ロ)0~50重量%からなる樹脂組成物(ニ)から形成された表層を積層してなる多層積層体。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明はフィルム(film)およびシート(sheet)材料として 好適な新規多層積層体に関し、更に詳しくは透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性、溶断シール強度、 ヒートシール強度等に優れ、しかも透明性の経時変化の小さい多層積層体に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】従来から、数多くの単層あるいは多層のフィルム(film)およびシート(sheet)材料が開発されており、このような材料のうち、透明性、柔軟性、風合い等に優れる代表的なフィルム(film)として、ビニロンフィルム(film)がある。しかし、ビニロンはその特性上、風合いが気温や湿度に影響を受けやすく、特に耐寒性が悪いため、冬季に気温の下がる地域や寒冷地での使用には限界がある。また、残留酢酸臭やブロッキングしやすいという問題のほか、また製膜法が溶液キャスト法に限られるためコストも高くならざるを得ないという欠点のある。これらの問題点を解決するために、ポリオレフィ

ン系の単層および多層のフィルム(film)材料が多数開発されている。これらのポリオレ フィン系材料は、コストおよび耐寒性等の面で改善がみられるものの、透明性や柔軟性が ビニロン<u>フィルム(film)</u>より劣る点が問題となっている。さらに近年、芳香族ビニル化 合物系重合体ブロック、共役ジエン系化合物重合体ブロックもしくは芳香族ビニル化合物 と共役ジエン系化合物とのランダム共重合体ブロック、芳香族ビニル化合物と共役ジエン 系化合物からなり、芳香族ビニル化合物が漸増するテーパーブロックの2種以上のブロッ クより構成されるブロック共重合体を水素添加した水添ジエン系共重合体と、ポリオレフ ィン系樹脂とを主成分とする組成物からなる<u>シート (sheet) ・フィルム (film)</u>に対し て、ラミネート等の2次加工することが一般的に開示され(公開技報94-12864参 照)、また、プロピレン・エチレンブロック共重合体を主体とするポリオレフィンに、芳 香族ビニル化合物系重合体ブロックと水素添加された共役ジエン系化合物を主体とする重 合体ブロックとからなる水添ブロック共重合体を少量配合したレトルト用ポリオレフィン フィルム (film) に対して、プロピレン共重合体を主成分とする樹脂を積層することによ り、低温耐衝撃性、透明性、レトルト耐性および低温ヒートシール性のバランスに優れた <u>フィルム (film)</u> が得られることが開示されている(特開平7-1662024号公報参 照)。しかし、これらのフィルム (film) およびシート (sheet) も、透明性、柔軟性、 耐寒性、溶断シール強度およびヒートシール強度に加え、透明性の経時変化を総合した特 性バランスの面では、未だ満足できるレベルにない。

[0003]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】本発明は、上記従来技術の諸問題を背景になされたものであり、その課題は、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性、溶断シール強度、ヒートシール強度等に優れ、しかも透明性の経時変化の小さい多層積層体を提供することにある。

[0004]

【課題を解決するための手段】即ち、本発明は、ポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)95~20 重量%および共役ジエン化合物と芳香族ビニル化合物とのランダム共重合部分を主体とする少なくとも1種の重合体の共役ジエン部分の二重結合が水素添加された水添ジエン系重合体(ロ)5~80重量%からなる樹脂組成物(ハ)から形成された基材層の少なくとも一方の面に、ポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)100~50重量%および少なくとも1種の水添ジエン系重合体(ロ)0~50重量%からなる樹脂組成物(ニ)から形成された表層を積層してなる多層積層体、を要旨とする。

【0005】以下、本発明について詳細に説明する。樹脂組成物(ハ)および樹脂組成物 (ニ) の(イ) 成分として使用されるポリプロピレン系樹脂は公知のものであり、単独重 合体であっても、プロピレンと他のモノマーとの共重合体であってもよいが、好ましくは 共重合体である。前記共重合体における好ましい他のモノマーとしては、例えばエチレ ン;ブテンー1、ペンテンー1、ヘキセンー1、ヘプテンー1、オクテンー1等の直鎖状 a-オレフィン:4-メチルペンテン-1、2-メチルプロペン-1、3-メチルペンテ ン-1、5-メチルヘキセン-1、4-メチルヘキセン-1、4, 4-ジメチルペンテン-1等の分岐状aーオレフィン等が挙げられ、より好ましくはエチレン;ブテンー1、ペン テン-1、ヘキセン-1、ヘプテン-1、オクテン-1等の直鎖状α-オレフィンであ り、特に好ましくは、エチレン、ブテン-1である。これらの他のモノマーは、単独でま たは2種以上を混合して使用することができる。本発明においては、前記共重合体からな るプロピレン系樹脂を使用することにより、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性等の物性バランスに 優れた多層積層体が得られ、就中プロピレンとエチレンおよび/またはブテンー1との共 重合体を使用することにより、前記物性バランスに特に優れた多層積層体が得られる。前 記共重合体における他のモノマーの共重合量は、通常、15重量%以下、好ましくは12 重量%以下、より好ましくは2~10重量%である。この場合、他のモノマーの共重合量 が15重量%より多いと、得られる多層積層体の透明性の経時的低下に対する改良効果が 不十分となる場合がある。前記共重合体の構造については特に制限がなく、例えばランダ ム型、ブロック型、グラフト型、これらの混合型等いずれであってもよいが、好ましくは ランダム型である。このようにランダム型共重合体からなるポリプロピレン系樹脂を使用 することにより、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性等の物性バランスに特に優れた多層積層体が得

られる。ポリプロピレン系樹脂のメルトフローレート(MFR:230 $^{\circ}$ C、2.16kg 荷重)は、 $^{\circ}$ フィルム(film) あるいはシート(sheet)として成形可能である限り特に制限はないが、好ましくは0.5~15g/10分、さらに好ましくは1~10g/10分とすることにより、成形性、透明性等に優れた多層積層体が得られる。本発明において、前記ポリプロピレン系樹脂は、単独でまたは2種以上を混合して使用することができる。樹脂組成物(ハ)中のポリプロピレン系樹脂の配合量は、95~20重量%、好ましくは90~40重量%である。この場合、ポリプロピレン系樹脂の配合量が95重量%より多いと、フィルム(film)およびシート(sheet)の柔軟性および透明性が低下し、また20重量%未満では、得られる多層積層体の強度および組成物の成形性が低下する。また、本発明の樹脂組成物(ニ)中のポリプロピレン系樹脂の配合量は、100~50重量%、好ましくは95~80重量%、特に好ましくは95~85重量%である。この場合、ポリプロピレン系樹脂の配合量が50重量%未満では、フィルム(film)およびシート(sheet)の初期の透明性には優れるが、経時的な透明性の低下が大きくなる。

【0006】次に、樹脂組成物(ハ)および樹脂組成物(二)の(ロ)成分として使用さ れる水添ジエン系重合体は、共役ジエン化合物と芳香族ビニル化合物とのランダム共重合 部分を主体とする重合体(以下、「水添前重合体」という。)を水素添加した少なくとも 1種の重合体からなる。水添前重合体中のランダム共重合部分の含量は、好ましくは50 重量%以上、さらに好ましくは60重量%以上、特に好ましくは70重量%以上である。 この場合、該ランダム共重合部分の含量が50重量%未満では、得られる多層積層体の透 明性、柔軟性、耐寒性等が低下する傾向がある。また、水添前重合体において、ランダム 共重合部分中の共役ジエン単位の1,2-結合と3,4-結合との合計の割合は、全共役 ジエン単位に対して、好ましくは60%以上、さらに好ましくは65%以上、特に好まし くは70%以上である。この場合、前記1,2-結合と3,4-結合との合計の割合が6 0%未満では、ポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)とブレンドした場合の透明性および柔軟性に 対する改良効果が低下する傾向がある。水添前重合体において、共役ジエン化合物として は、例えば1,3-ブタジエン、イソプレン、2,3-ジメチル-1,3-ブタジエン、 1, 3-ペンタジエン、2-メチル-1, 3-ペンタジエン、1, 3-ヘキサジエン、 4, 5-ジエチル-1, 3-オクタジエン、3-ブチル-1, 3-オクタジエン、クロロ プレン等が挙げられるが、工業的に利用でき、また物性の優れた水添ジエン系重合体を得 るには、1, 3-ブタジエン、イソプレン、1, 3-ペンタジエンが好ましく、特に好ま しくは1,3-ブタジエン、イソプレンである。これらの共役ジエンは、単独でまたは2 種以上を混合して使用することができる。また、芳香族ビニル化合物としては、例えばス チレン、α-メチルスチレン、p-メチルスチレン、t-ブチルスチレン、ジビニルベンゼ ン、N、N-ジメチル-p-アミノエチルスチレン、N、N-ジエチル-p-アミノエチ ルスチレン、ビニルピリジン等が挙げられ、好ましくはスチレン、αーメチルスチレンで ある。これらの芳香族ビニル化合物は、単独でまたは2種以上を混合して使用することが できる。水添前重合体における共役ジエン化合物/芳香族ビニル化合物の重量比は、特に 限定されるものではないが、好ましくは95/5~40/60、さらに好ましくは93/ $7 \sim 50 / 50$ である。

【0007】水添前重合体は、共役ジエン化合物と芳香族ビニル化合物とのランダム共重合部分を主体とするものであるが、場合により、その重合体分子鎖中に下記のごとき重合体ブロックが含まれていてもよい。前記重合体ブロックとしては、例えば、芳香族ビニル化合物の単独重合体ブロック、1、4ー結合を主体とするポリブタジエンブロック、共役ジエン化合物と芳香族ビニル化合物からなり芳香族ビニル化合物単位が漸増するテーパー状重合体ブロック等が挙げられる。これらの重合体ブロックが水添前重合体の分子鎖中に存在することにより、水添ジエン系重合体の物性上の特徴は若干低下するものの、ブロッキング性が低下することにより取扱い性が向上するため、工業的に有利となる場合がある。水添前重合体中の前記重合体ブロックの含量は、特に限定されないが、好ましくは50重量%以下、さらに好ましくは40重量%以下、特に好ましくは30重量%以下である。この場合、重合体ブロックの含量が50重量%を超えると、得られる多層積層体の透

明性、柔軟性、耐寒性等が低下する傾向がある。

【0008】また、水添前重合体は、重合体分子鎖がカップリング剤残基を介して延長または分岐された構造を有することもできる。この場合に使用されるカップリング剤としては、例えばアジピン酸ジエチル、ジビニルベンゼン、ジメチルクロロシラン、四塩化ケイ素、ブチルトリクロロケイ素、ジメチルジクロロシラン、テトラクロロ錫、ブチルトリクロロ錫、テトラクロロゲルマニウム、1,2-ジブロムエタン、1,4-クロロメチルベンゼン、ビス(トリクロロシリル)エタン、エポキシ化アマニ油、トリレンジイソシアネート、1,2,4-ベンゼントリイソシアネート等が挙げられる。

【0009】水添ジエン系重合体は、水添前重合体における共役ジエン部分の二重結合が水素添加されたものである。この水素添加に際して、水添前重合体は、単独でまたは2種以上を混合して使用することができる。水添ジエン系重合体における水素添加率は、好ましくは80%以上、さらに好ましくは85%以上、特に好ましくは90%以上である。この場合、水素添加率が80%未満であると、多層積層体の透明性、機械的強度、耐熱性、耐候性等が低下する傾向がある。水添ジエン系重合体のポリスチレン換算数平均分子量(以下、「数平均分子量」と略記する。)は、好ましくは5万~70万、さらに好ましくは5万~60万である。この場合、数平均分子量が5万未満では、水添ジエン系重合体をペレット化した場合ブロッキングしやすくなり、かつポリプロピレン系樹脂(イ)とブレンドした場合機械的強度が低下し、また70万を超えると、流動性、加工性等が低下する。水添ジエン系重合体は、例えば特開平3-72512号公報に開示されている方法によって製造することができる。

【0010】さらに、樹脂組成物(ハ)および樹脂組成物(ニ)の(ロ)成分として使用される水添ジエン系重合体は、1種以上の官能基を導入した変性体であることもできる。前記官能基としては、例えばカルボキシル基、酸無水物基、水酸基、エポキシ基、アミノ基、アンモニウム塩基、ハロゲン原子含有基、スルホン酸基等や、これらの官能基から誘導される基、例えばエステル基等が挙げられる。このような官能基は、それらの種類に応じて、水添前重合体に対する水素添加の前または後に導入される。本発明において、前記水添ジエン系重合体は、単独でまたは2種以上を混合して使用することができる。

【0011】本発明の基材層を形成する樹脂組成物(ハ)は、前記(イ)成分と(ロ)成分からなる。該樹脂組成物中の(ロ)成分の配合量は、 $5\sim80$ 重量%、好ましくは $10\sim70$ 重量%、特に好ましくは $10\sim60$ 重量%である。この場合、(ロ)成分の配合量が5重量%未満では、24ルム(film)およびシート(sheet)の柔軟性および透明性が低下し、また80重量%より多いと、得られる多層積層体の強度および成形性が低下する。また、本発明の表層を形成する樹脂組成物(二)は、前記(イ)成分と場合により配合される(ロ)成分からなる。該樹脂組成物中の(ロ)成分の配合量は、50重量%以下であればよく、好ましくは $5\sim20$ 重量%、特に好ましくは $5\sim15$ 重量%である。この場合、(ロ)成分の配合量が50重量%を超えると、24ルム(film)およびシート

(sheet) の初期透明性は良好であるが、経時的な透明性の低下が大きくなる。但し、本発明においては、樹脂組成物(ニ)中の(ロ)成分の配合量を、樹脂組成物(ハ)中の(ロ)成分の配合量を、樹脂組成物(ハ)中の(ロ)成分の配合量を、樹脂組成物(ハ)中の(ロ)成分の配合量を同等以下とすることが好ましい。本発明の多層積層体は、樹脂組成物(ハ)から形成される基材層の少なくとも一方の面に、樹脂組成物(ニ)から形成される表層を積層してなるものであり、かかる多層積層体においては、基材層と表層とが相互に補いあるいは相乗して、優れた特性を有する多層積層体が形成される。したがって本発明においては、樹脂組成物(ハ)および樹脂組成物(ニ)中の(イ)成分と(ロ)成分との配合量等の諸条件は、多層積層体の所望の特性に応じて応じて本発の組合せ、(ロ)成分の配合量等の諸条件は、多層積層体の所望の特性に応じて応じてエチレンープロピレン共重合体(EPM)、エチレンーブテンー1 共重合体(EBM)、エチレンープロピレン中非共役ジエン共重合体(EPDM)、ポリブテンー1、ポリエチン等のオレフィン系(共)重合体;アイオノマー、エチレンー酢酸ビニル共重合体(EVOA)、ポリビニルアルコール(PVA)、エチレンービニルアルコール共重合体(EVOH)等の他の樹脂を、樹脂組成物(ハ)および/または樹脂組成物(ニ)中に配合することもできる。また、樹脂組成物(ハ)および/または樹脂組成物(ニ)には、本発明の特

徴を本質的に損なわない範囲で、必要に応じてブロッキング防止剤、帯電防止剤、滑剤のほか、有機系抗菌剤、無機系抗菌剤、酸化防止剤、防暴剤、着色剤、紫外線吸収剤等の公知の添加剤を配合することもできる。前記ブロッキング防止剤としては、例えばシリカ、ゼオライト等が好適であり、これらは天然、合成の何れでもよい。また前記帯電防止剤としては、炭素数12~18のアルキル基を有するN,Nービスー(2ーヒドロキシエチル)ーアルキルアミン類やグリセリン脂肪酸エステルが好ましい。さらに、前記滑剤としては、脂肪酸アミドが好ましく、具体的にはエルカ酸アミド、ベヘニン酸アミド、ステアリン酸アミド、オレイン酸アミド等が挙げられる。

【0012】本発明の樹脂組成物(ハ)および樹脂組成物(二)における(イ)成分と(ロ)成分との混合は、例えばバンバリーミキサー、ロールミル、押出し成形機等の適宜の 混合機を用いて行うことができるが、押出し成形機中で溶融混練することが好ましく、特 に2軸押出し成形機を用いて溶融混練することが好ましい。このように2軸押出し成形機 により溶融混練した樹脂組成物を使用することにより、<u>フィルム(film)</u>および<u>シート</u> <u>(sheet)</u>中のフィッシュアイが少なくなり、外観に優れるばかりでなく、透明性がさら に優れた<u>フィルム (film)</u> および<u>シート (sheet)</u> が得られる。なお、2 軸押出し成形機 を用いて溶融混練した樹脂組成物は、通常、ペレット化して使用される。本発明の多層積 層体は、例えば(a) 基材層と表層とを<u>インフレーション(inflation)</u>法、<u>Tダイ(T·die)</u>法等 の通常の方法でフィルム (film) あるいは<u>シート (sheet)</u> に成形したのち、熱貼合する 方法、(b) 共押出しタイプの<u>インフレーション(inflation</u>)成形機や<u>Tダイ(T·die)</u>押出し成 形機により直接積層成形する方法、 (c) 例えば前記 (a)の方法で予め成形した基材層あ るいは表層の少なくとも一方の面に他方の層を押出しラミネートする方法等の公知の方法 で積層して製造することができる。前記(a) および(b) の方法に使用される<u>Tダイ(T-die)</u>押 出し成形機のTダイ(T·die)は、マルチマニホールドタイプまたはフィードブロックタイプ の何れでもよい。これらの方法のうち、(b) の方法が好ましく、特に好ましい方法は、共 押出しタイプの<u>Tダイ(T-die)</u>押出し成形機を用いる方法である。前記(b) の方法では、基 材層の一方の面に表層を積層する2層共押出し法、基材層の両方の面に表層を積層する3 **層共押出し法のほか、4層以上の多層押出し法を採用することができるが、耐ブロッキン** グ性および透明性の経時変化の点から、少なくとも基材層の両方の面に表層を積層するこ とが好ましい。また、本発明の多層積層体は、透明性が要求される用途には両鏡面として 使用されるが、透明性がそれほど要求されない用途では、最外層の表層の少なくとも一方 にマット、絞り、型押し等の意匠を施してもよい。本発明の多層積層体は、基材層の一方 の面または両方の面に表層が積層されているが、基材層の両面に積層された各表層は同一 でも異なってもよく、また基材層の一方の面または両方の面に、表層を2層以上積層する こともできる。本発明の多層積層体は、場合により2つ以上貼合して使用することもでき る。本発明の多層積層体の厚さは、多層積層体の所望の特性や用途に応じて適宜選択され るが、成形性および強度の観点から、10μm以上であることが好ましく、さらに好まし くは20μm以上である。また、本発明の多層積層体における基材層と表層との厚さの比 率は、多層積層体の所望の特性や用途に応じて適宜選択されるが、基材層/表層=1/ $1\sim 8/1$ の範囲にあるのが好ましく、さらに好ましくは基材層/表層= $2/1\sim 6/1$ の範囲である。

[0013]

【発明の実施の形態】以下、実施例を挙げて本発明の実施の形態をさらに具体的に説明するが、本発明は、その要旨を超えない限り、これらの実施例に何ら制約されるものではない。実施例および比較例中の各種評価は、次のようにして行った。 芳香族ビニル化合物の結合量(重量%) 赤外分析法による $6.79\,\mathrm{cm}\cdot 1$ のフェニル基の吸収により測定した。共役ジエン部分のビニル結合含量(%) 赤外分析法を用い、ハンプトン法により算出した。 水素添加率(%) 溶媒として四塩化エチレンを用い、 $1.00\,\mathrm{MHz}$ での $1\mathrm{H-NMR}$ スペクトルにより算出した。 水流ジエン系重合体の数平均分子量溶媒としてトリクロルベンゼンを用い、 $1.35\,\mathrm{D}$ におけるゲルパーミエーションクロマトグラフィー(GPC)により、ポリスチレン換算して算出した。 フィルム (film) 強度 ASTM D 882に準拠して、フィルム (film) 強度を測定し、以下の基準で判定した。 フィルム (film) 強度

が 3 0 0 kgf/cm2 以上 ・・・ 〇 <u>フィルム (film)</u>強度が 3 0 0 kgf/cm2 未満 ・・・× 透 <u>明性 ASTM D 1003に準拠して、成形直後のフィルム (film)</u> ヘーズ (%) を測定 し、以下の基準で判定した。 [厚さ40 μm フィルム (film) の場合] ヘーズが2%以下 ・・・o ヘーズが 2 %より高く 3 %以下 ・・・□ ヘーズが 3 %より高い ・・・× 〔厚さ 100μm<u>フィルム (film)</u>の場合] ヘーズが3%以下 ・・・ o ヘーズが3%より高く 4%以下 ・・・ □ ヘーズが4%より高い ・・・× <u>柔軟性</u> ASTM D 882に準拠し て、ヤング率 (kg/mm2) を測定し、以下の基準で判定した。 ヤング率が30kg/mm2以下 ・・・ o ヤング率が30kg/mm2より高く40kg/mm2以下 ・・・ 🛘 ヤング率が4 0 kg/mm 2より高い ・・・ × 耐寒性 -10口における触感により、以下の基準で判定し た。常温の場合と同等に柔軟である ・・・○ 常温の場合に比べてやや硬い ・・・□ 常温 の場合に比べて非常に硬い ・・・× <u>溶断シール強度</u> 溶断シールを行ったのちシール部を 引裂き、以下の基準で判定した。 シール部は破壊せず非シール部が伸びる ・・・ o シー ル部は裂けるが抵抗があり非シール部も伸びる ・・・ □ 抵抗が無くシール部が裂ける ・ ・・× <u>透明性の経時変化</u> 50□の恒温槽中に1週間放置したのちの<u>フィルム(film)</u>へー ズ(%)を、ASTMD 1003に準拠して測定し、以下の基準で評価した。 初期へ一 ズとの差が0. 5以下・・・・ 初期ヘーズとの差が0. 5より大きく1. 0以下・・・ □ 初期へーズとの差が1.0より大きい ・・・ ×実施例および比較例の配合処方に用い た各成分は、以下の通りである。(イ)成分(イ・1) ポリプロピレン(チッソ石油化学(株) 製、商品名FM831B)(イ・2)ポリプロピレン(三菱化学(株)製、商品名FX 4) (ロ) 成分表1に示す水添ジエン系重合体(ロ・1) ~ (ロ・6) を合成した。水添ジエ ン系重合体(ロ-7) は、シェル(株)社製水添スチレンーブタジエンースチレンブロック 共重合体 (SEBS) (商品名クレイトンG-1652) である。これらの水添ジエン系 重合体のミクロ構造、数平均分子量および水素添加率を、表1にまとめて示す。 [0014]

【0015】実施例2 (イ·1) 成分の代わりに (イ·2) 成分を使用した以外は、実施例1と同様にして、各種評価を行った。その結果、得られた3層積層体は、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性、溶断シール強度およびフィルム (film) 強度が優れ、また透明性の経時変化も極めて小さいものであった。評価結果を表2に示す。

【0016】実施例3および実施例4 (ロ-1) 成分の代わりに (ロ-2) 成分または (ロ-3) 成分を使用した以外は、実施例1 と同様にして、各種評価を行った。その結果、得られた3層積層体は、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性、溶断シール強度およびフィルム (film) 強度が優れ、また透明性の経時変化も極めて小さいものであった。評価結果を表 2 に示す。【0017】実施例5 実施例1と同様にして、 (4-1) 成分40重量部と (0-1) 成分60重量部からなる樹脂組成物 (n) および (4-1) 成分85重量部と (0-1) 成分15重量部およびブロッキング防止剤シリカ0.2 重量部からなる樹脂組成物 (=) を得た。次いで、厚さを100 μ mとした以外は実施例1と同様にして、得られた各樹脂組成物から3層積層体を得たのち、各種評価を行った。その結果、得られた3層積層体は、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性およびフィルム (film) 強度が優れ、また透明性の経時変化も極めて小さいものであった。評価結果を表 2 に示す。

【0018】実施例6実施例5と同様の樹脂組成物(ハ)および樹脂組成物(ニ)から、 表層と基材層との厚さの比率が1/4の2層積層体を得た以外は、実施例1と同様にし て、各種評価を行った。その結果、得られた2層積層体は、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性およ びフィルム (film) 強度が優れたものであった。評価結果を表2に示す。

【0019】比較例1~4 (ロ·1) の代わりに (ロ·4)~ (ロ·7) を使用した以外は、実施 例1と同様にして、各種評価を行った。その結果、比較例1の3層積層体は、透明性に優 れるものの、溶断シール強度および<u>フィルム(film)</u>強度が劣り、透明性の経時変化も大 きく、またブロッキングが激しく衣料材料包装フィルム(film)として使用できなかっ た。さらに比較例2~4の3層積層体は、不透明であった。評価結果を表3に示す。

【0020】比較例5 (イ・1) 成分98重量部と(ロ・1) 成分2重量部から樹脂組成物(ハ)を得た以外は、実施例1と同様にして、各種評価を行った。その結果、得られた3層 積層体は、透明性、柔軟性、溶断シール強度等が劣っていた。評価結果を表3に示す。

【0021】比較例6 (イ・1) 成分10重量部と(ロ・1) 成分90重量部から樹脂組成物 (ハ)を得た以外は、実施例1と同様にして、各種評価を行った。その結果、得られた3 層積層体は、フィルム(film)強度が劣っていた。評価結果を表3に示す。

【0022】比較例7(イ・1)成分60重量部、(ロ・1)成分40重量部およびシリカ 0. 2重量部から樹脂組成物(ニ)を得た以外は、実施例1と同様にして、各種評価を行 った。その結果、得られた3層積層体は、透明性の経時変化が大きかった。評価結果を表 3に示す。

[0023]

【表1】

_ 表									
水添ジエン系共重合体	□-1	□-2	□-8	□-4	□-5	₽-6	ㅁ-7		
水添前重合体の構造									
・共役ジエン化合物	BD(*1)	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD		
・芳香族ビニル化合物	ST(*1)	ST	ST	ST	ST	ST	ST		
・ランダム共重合部分 の含量(重量%)	92	94	85	94	94	92	0		
・共役ジエン単位の1, 2-結合と3,4-結合と の合計の割合(#2)	82	79	78	75	20	78	_		
・共役ジェン化合物/ 芳香族ビニル化合物 の重量比	88/12	93/7	78/22	92/8	91/9	90/10	71/29		
水素添加率(%)	99	99	97	97	95	30	99		
数平均分子量(×10 ⁴)	31	39	28	4.5	25	76	-		

(*1) BD: ブタジエン、ST: スチレン。

(#2) ランダム共重合部分における全共役ジェン単位に対する割合(%)。

[0024]

【表 2】

表 2

_ 表 2									
			実 加	16 例					
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
樹脂組成物(ハ)				·					
・ (イ) 成分 (重量%)	イ-1 (80)	イ-2 (80)	イ-1 (80)	イ-1 (80)	イ-1 (40)	イー1 (40)			
・(ロ)成分(重量%)	ロ-1 (20)	u-1 (20)	(20)	ㅁ-3 (20)	ロ-1 (60)	ㅁ-1 (60)			
樹脂組成物(二)									
・ (イ) 成分 (重量%)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-2 (92.5)	1-1 (92.5)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-1 (85)	イ-1 (85)			
・(ロ)成分(重量%)	□-1 (7.5)	□-1 (7.5)	□-2 (7.5)	□-3 (7.5)	□-1 (15)	u-1 (15)			
透明性	. 0	0	0	0	0	0			
柔軟性	0	0	0	0	0	0			
耐寒性	0	0	0	0	0	0			
溶断シール強度	0	0	0	0	_	_			
フィルム強度	0	0	0	0	0	0			
透明性の経時変化	0	0	0	0	0	Δ			

【0025】 【表3】 表 3

<u>xx</u>								
			ŀ	北較 6	利			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
樹脂組成物(ハ)								
・(イ)成分(重量%)	イ-1 (80)	イ-2 (80)	イ-1 (80)	イ-1 (80)	イ-1 (98)	イ-1 (10)	イー1 (80)	
・ (ロ) 成分 (重量%)	12-4 (20)	□-5 (20)	12-6 (20)	□-7 (20)	□-1 (2)	ㅁ-1 (90)	□-1 (20)	
樹脂組成物(二)								
・ (イ) 成分 (重量%)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-2 (92.5)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-1 (92.5)	イ-1 (60)	
・ (ロ) 成分 (重量%)	□-4 (7.5)	u-5 (7.5)	ㅁ-6 (7.5)	□-7 (7.5)	□-1 (7.5)	D-1 (7.5)	□-1 (40)	
透明性	0	×	×	×	×	0	0	
柔軟性	0	Δ	Δ	Δ	×	0	0	
耐寒性	0	_	_	-	Δ	0	0	
溶断シール強度	×	-	-	_	×	0	0	
フィルム強度	×	0	0	0	0	×	0	
透明性の経時変化	×	-	-	-	0	0	×	

[0026]

【発明の効果】本発明の多層積層体は、透明性、柔軟性、耐寒性、溶断シール強度、ヒートシール強度等に優れ、しかも透明性の経時変化が小さく、衣料材料包装用フィルム(film)、ブックカバー、電子回路成形用フィルム(film)、文具包装用フィルム(film)、医療用包装フィルム(film)、医療用廃棄袋、医療衛生材料、化粧フィルム(film)、表面保護フィルム(film)、文具、食品容器等の様々な分野に好適に用いることができる。